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TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS IN RUMANIA

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I. LAND TRANSPORT

A. Railroads

Railroads are the most important means of transportation in Rumania. They carry agricultural produce, lumber and wood products, cattle, raw materials, machinery, consumer goods, petroleum products, and other items.

Rumania's railroad trackage falls far short of the needs of the country. The densest network of railroads is found in Timisoara Regiune, because of the concentration of industries in Timisoara, Resita, Anina, Lugoj, etc. The least trackage is found in the Dobruja which explains why this region lagged far behind other regions up to recent years.

Rumanian railroad lines are distributed as follows:

There are, first, three rings of lines. The first railroad ring surrounds the greater part of the Transylvanian Plateau, connecting numerous industrial, mining, and agricultural centers, such as Stalin, Targul Mures, Ruzsboeni, and Fagaras. The second railroad ring follows the outer line of the Carpathian Mountains, passing through the most important urban centers in the eastern, southern, and western parts of the country, such as Viscani, Marasesti, Bucharest, Craiova, Timisoara, and Satu Mare. The third railroad ring connects the peripheral regions of the country, such as Dorohoi, Iasi, Galati, Rosiori de Vede, and Craiova.

The first two rings are interconnected through a series of secondary railroad lines which cross the Carpathian Mountains at nine points and which link the centers located on one side of the mountain range with those on the other side. The lines crossing the eastern Carpathian Mountains connect forestry, mining, and agricultural regions. The lines crossing the southern Carpathian Mountains join the principal industrial regions of the country with the agricultural regions and with the capital. The lines crossing the Apuseni Mountains connect the industrial cities of Transylvania with the industrial and agricultural regions of the west. Two of these nine lines across the Carpathians are new and have recently been put in operation. One runs along the Salautei Valley from Salva to Viseu forming a connection with the Maramures region, a region rich in natural resources but still backward. The second of these two newly completed lines runs through the Jiu River Valley from Bumbesti to Livezeni, connecting the Hunedoara industrial region with the industrial and agricultural centers of southern Rumania.

Aside from these three important railroad rings and the nine lines crossing the Carpathians, there is another series of important rail lines leading to the Danube River. Fourteen of the 23 Danube ports are connected by railroad lines with various industrial or agricultural centers of the country. One of the most important of these lines connects Bucharest with the port of Constanta. Another important line is the Oradea-Bucharest-Constanta line which crosses the country and joins Oradea Regiune with Constanta Regiune, the easternmost region. Northern and Southern Rumania are connected by the Viscani-Bucharest-Giurgiu line.

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The following railroad lines lead to the USSR: Bucharest-Galati-Reni, Bucharest-Pascani-Iasi-Ungheni, Bucharest-Marasesti-Pascani-Viscani, and Bucharest-Stalin-Dej-Satu Mare-Halmei. The following lines connect Rumania with Bulgaria: Bucharest-Giurgiu and Medgidia-Negru Voda, the latter being a secondary railroad line. The following lines connect Rumania with other People's Democracies or with other European countries: Bucharest-Stalin-Arad-Curtici, Bucharest-Stalin-Cluj-Oradea-Episcopia, and Bucharest-Stalin-Oradea-Satu Mare-Halmei. The railroad line connecting Rumania with Yugoslavia runs through Bucharest, Timisoara, and Jimbolia.

Transportation by narrow-gauge railroad plays an important role in the economy of the nation, especially in forestry and mining operations. Narrow-gauge lines are more frequent in the mountainous regions of the country, but they also operate on plateaus and hilly regions, such as in Oltenia and on the Transylvanian plateau.

The most important standard-gauge lines are the following: Oradea-Bucharest-Constanta, Vicsani-Buzau-Bucharest, Bucharest-Pitesti-Timisoara, and Valea Muresului-Alba Iulia-Arad. In regions where there are no rail lines, or where they are inadequate, transport of goods is made by vehicle.

In his speech at the annual meeting of railroad workers, Gheorghiu-Dej made the following statement with reference to the increase in the volume of commodity transport: "As far as freight traffic is concerned, the volume of net kilometer tons more than doubled in 1952, as compared to 1944. The average rate of car-loading was 200 percent higher in 1952 than in 1944."

From 1944 to 1948, the following new railroad lines were put in operation: the Salva-Viseu rail line, which connects the Maramures region with the rest of the country; the Bumbesti-Livezeni line, which carries the main freight and passenger traffic in the Valea Oltului and Valea Prahovei regions; and the Bucharest-Rosiorii de Vede-Craiova line, which contributes to the economic development of the important Bucharest and Craiova agricultural regions. Other important lines were set up in Ploesti Regiune for the development of the petroleum industry, in Barlad and Braila for the development of the agricultural regions, and in Bacau for the development of the various electrification programs.

Considerable improvements have been achieved in the transportation systems. Confusion, loss of time and materials, uncertainty of schedules, and unexplained delays have been eliminated, by a more rational method of transportation. For the first time in the history of the country, women are employed in locomotive crews and in road gangs. Also for the first time, trains have been equipped with radio loudspeakers to make trips more pleasant and more instructive. Railroads have high-powered locomotives and large freight cars, all of them constructed by Rumania's young locomotive industries in Bucharest, Stalin, Resita, Timisoara, and Arad. [A small map showing primary railroads in Rumania not here reproduced, is available in the original document.]

B. Highways and Roads

The total length of roads and highways in Rumania is much greater today than in 1944. The southern and southwestern regions of Rumania, especially those around Bucharest, are covered by a large network of roads. Rumania's roads are classed as follows:

- a. National roads which connect the various scattered regions of the country, such as the highway connecting Suceava Regiune with Bucharest Regiune.
- b. Regiune roads which connect the raion and regiune seats with the rest of the regiune or raion.

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c. Raion and commune roads which connect the communes and raions. Many of the older roads were asphalted, and the following highways were constructed when automobile traffic spread: the Oradea-Cluj-Sibiu-Stalin-Bucharest-Giurgiu highway, which is part of the Paris-Istanbul international highway; the Bucharest-Alexandria highway, which connects the capital with one of the most important agricultural regions; the Bucharest-Pitesti-Curtea de Arges highway; the Bucharest-Ploesti-Buzau-Bacau highway; the Bucharest-Afumat highway; the Alba Iulia-Deva highway; the Constanta-Mangalia highway; the Stalin-Targul Secuesc-Bretcu highway; and the Orsova-Mehadia highway.

Traffic on highways and roads is either by animal-drawn or motor vehicles, but the former far outnumber the latter. In Suceava, animal-drawn vehicles predominate because railroads do not offer any connection between the Suceava plateau and the Moldavian plains. Another example is seen in the Dobruja region, which made little economic progress because the only land route connecting it with the rest of the country was the Bucharest-Giurgeni highway, with a ferry crossing of the Danube at Valea Oil.

The largest amount of animal-drawn vehicular traffic is in the southern part of Rumania where connection must be made between agricultural regions and the larger cities. [A small map showing animal-drawn vehicular traffic in Rumania, not here reproduced, is available in the original document.]

The following highways have the highest rate of vehicular traffic: the Bucharest-Ploesti-Stalin highway with its two alternates; Ploesti-Buzau and Ploesti-Targoviste-Pucioasa; the Bucharest-Alexandria highway; the Bucharest-Pitesti highway; the highways leading from Stalin to Moldova, Stalin to Sighisoara, Stalin to Sibiu, and Stalin to Cluj; the Deva-Sebes highway in Hunedoara Regiune; and the Craiova-Bals highway in Oltenia. Other highways in the central and northwestern parts of the country have a lower rate of vehicular traffic.

After the transition to a planned economy, the land transportation system of Rumania improved considerably. The 1949 and 1950 state plans brought important progress to freight and passenger transport. The former RATA (Regia Autonomă a Transporturilor cu Autovehicule, Autonomous Administration of Motor Transport), now AUTO [not explained] operates over 7,000 kilometers of roadways for both passengers and freight.

II. WATER TRANSPORT

Water transport is of special importance to the economy of the country because it is much cheaper than rail transport. A barge pulled by a tugboat can carry 60-80 carloads of freight, and large tonnage boats can carry thousands of tons of freight in a single trip.

Inland waterway navigation in Rumania is still very backward. The only routes used are the Danube, the lower part of the Prut River, and the Bega Canal. Other waterways are not used for navigation. Rivers such as the Siretul, Bistrita, Argesul, Oltul, Muresul, etc. could all easily be navigated inasmuch as they have large volumes of water and short periods of freezing, but their use for navigation has been completely neglected.

A. River Transport

The oldest and most important navigation artery in Rumania is the Danube River. It extends 1,075 kilometers in Rumanian territory (from Bazias to Sulina) and has an average volume of flow of 8,000 cubic meters per second. The course of the Danube can be divided into two sectors: the Bazias-Braila sector,

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covering a distance of 905 kilometers, and navigable only by vessels of up to 600 tons because of many underwater obstacles; and the Braila-Sulina sector, covering a distance of 170 kilometers at an average depth of 12 meters, and navigable by vessels up to 1,000 tons. Generally speaking, vessels carry a reduced load during the summer because the Danube has a reduced water volume.

The port cities of Rumania have important roles in the economy of the country. Orsova serves the entire Banat region. It is here that large quantities of minerals are unloaded in exchange for industrial products. Ferrous minerals which are unloaded at this port come from the USSR and are destined for Resita. Another important port is Turnu Severin, which was an insignificant Danube port in the past, but today has a large part of the naval construction industry. Giurgiu is considered the port for the city of Bucharest, because it is through Giurgiu that raw materials and imported goods pass to Bucharest and also through there that Rumanian products are shipped for export.

Braila specialized in the storage and export of grains in the past, but today this city is an important industrial and naval construction center. Galati has docks for grain storage and plays an important role in the export of wood and the import of iron and metallurgical coke from the USSR. Like Braila, Galati is an important industrial center for naval construction.

Tulcea occupies an important position today as the principal fish inspection point and also as a refueling point for vessels en route from Galati to the Black Sea. Sulina is the easternmost port of Rumania, through which all vessels entering or leaving the Black Sea must pass.

Communication points between Rumania and Bulgaria are Tarnu Magurele, Zimnicea, Giurgiu, and Calarasi. Prior to the war, the Danube River was under the control of the European Danube Commission, but after the 1948 Belgrade Conference, the Danube passed under the control of the countries bordering it. Aside from the Danube River, the other two waterways which can be used for inland navigation are the Prut River and the Bega Canal. The Prut River is navigable for a distance of 205 kilometers and can accommodate vessels of small tonnage. The Bega Canal, whose total length is 115 kilometers, extends through Rumanian territory for a distance of 40 kilometers. The canal is used mostly by barges and tugboats carrying grain. Some of Rumania's rivers, such as the Bistrita, Siretul, Oltul and Muresul, are used for the transportation of logs by means of rafts or floats.

B. Maritime Transport

The two leading ports of Rumania are Constanta and Sulina. Vessels leaving these two ports follow the Istanbul-Piraeus-Alexandria-Taifa-Naples-Marseilles-Barcelona route and at times enter the Atlantic Ocean. The vessels serving Rumania's maritime lines are the Transilvania, Ardealul, Fr. Engels, Berezina, and Dimitrov. The volume of maritime traffic under the Five-Year Plan is expected to be far above that of previous years.

III. AIR TRANSPORT

Air transport is the youngest means of communication in Rumania. All air transport today is administered by the TARS (Transport Aereana Romana-Sovietic, Rumanian-Soviet Air Transport) which controls the following domestic lines: Bucharest-Iasi, Bucharest-Cluj-Satu Mare, Bucharest-Targul Mures, Bucharest-Arad, Bucharest-Timisoara, Arad-Cluj, Cluj-Targul Mures, and Bucharest-Constanta. International lines include Bucharest-Moscow, Bucharest-Prague, Bucharest-Budapest, Bucharest-Warsaw, and Bucharest-Sofia. [A small map showing air lines in Rumania, not here reproduced, is available in the original document.]

Rumania has also used airplanes to sow trees. Approximately 80,000 hectares of forest land are sown yearly by this method.

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IV. SPECIAL MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Another means of transport is underground pipes, used to transport water, petroleum, natural gases, and methane gas to the various industrial or export points of the country. The methane gas pipes feed the industrial centers of the Cluj and Stalin regiunes, the Hungarian Autonomous Regiune, and the industrial region in the Prahova Valley and in Bucharest.

Funicular transportation is widely used in the coal and mining industries and in the lumber industry. Cable railways also serve as transportation for tourists visiting such mountain resort centers as Poiana Stalin and Postavarul.

V. TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The postal and wire system of Rumania has grown considerably since the development of the nation's economy under the 1949 and 1950 state plan. The Five-Year Plan will increase the number of telegraphic centers and will ensure the creation of tens of thousands of new telephone stations in the many villages of the country. Radiofication has likewise increased since the nationalization of Rumania's industries.

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